

New Jersey PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

NJPAC

CONTACT:

JEROME H. ENIS AT HERBERT GEORGE ASSOCIATES 908.446-5400

RICHARD T. BRYANT AT NJPAC 201.648.8989

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER UNVEILS INAUGURAL SEASON PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & SCHOOLS

Broad Mix of Music, Dance and Theater Offered to Children of All Ages

NEWARK, NJ (January 21, 1997) -- The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) today announced its arts education programs and performances for the Inaugural Season in the new \$180-million Arts Center situated on the Newark Riverfront.

Expected to reach more than 100,000 children in nearly 100 communities during the next school year, the far-reaching education program is designed to attract students and families to the new Center, opening in October, and to sustain NJPAC's already significant presence in the schools.

At the heart of the education program is the new Bell Atlantic Passport to Culture SchoolTime Performance Series, a daytime series for student groups that features more than 110 performances by 37 different artists and companies. Most of these performances will be given in NJPAC's Victoria Theater, the 514-seat proscenium jewel box made possible, in part, by a generous gift from the Victoria Foundation. Bell Atlantic's

(more)

participation makes it possible to offer all seats for this series at just \$7 each. (Editors: A full listing of these performances is attached)

Bell Atlantic is also the sponsor of the FamilyTime Performance Series that will feature many of the same performing artists and companies as in the daytime series. FamilyTime performances are scheduled for evenings and weekends to encourage adults and children to attend the theater together. FamilyTime performance ticket prices range from \$7 to \$18 and will first be made available in March exclusively through multi-performance season tickets. Individual tickets will be placed on sale in June.

Buttressing these new performance programs are NJPAC's ongoing training programs, in-school residencies, professional development workshops and a roster of Principal Affiliates focussing on music, dance and theater. (Editors: A full listing of these programs is attached)

NJPAC celebrates the inauguration of its Bell Atlantic SchoolTime and FamilyTime Performance Series with the theme of harmony among all peoples. WQCD-101.9 is the SchoolTime series media sponsor.

Performing artists from every discipline will bring a world of culture to New Jersey's youth, including Sweet Honey in the Rock, Salsa Festival, Theatreworks/USA with its new play Paul

(more)

Robeson, Little Theatre of the Deaf in a World of Whys, the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company in Peach Flower Landscape, and the famous Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble.

Other season highlights include a Festival of Young Artists, showcasing some of the region's finest young performers; a Holiday Festival, designed to introduce children to the magic of international holiday celebrations; and a Youth Orchestra Festival presented in cooperation with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), the resident orchestra at NJPAC. NJSO will also offer eight concerts for children during the 1997-98 season.

Dr. P. Roy Vagelos, Co-chairman of the NJPAC Board of Trustees, said: "The knowledge that NJPAC would provide the finest cultural experiences for the children of New Jersey has been a driving force for the individuals and corporations who have donated their time and resources to the Arts Center. I believe it is fair to say, that the dream which has inspired us, is today a reality."

"We are particularly proud," said Albert W. Merck, a member of the NJPAC Board of Trustees and Chairman of its Arts Education Committee, "of the program's focus on the diversity and richness of the varied cultural traditions of New Jersey residents. Our aim is to enrich the lives of students and teachers and to carry them to a new level of experience with the performing arts."

(more)

THE FACILITY

The \$180-million Arts Center, which is more than 80 percent constructed, sits alongside the Newark Riverfront on a 12-acre site which will feature a landscaped public plaza and outdoor performance lawn.

The Center includes Prudential Hall, a 2,750-seat theater; Victoria Theater, a 514-seat playhouse that will be home to most SchoolTime and FamilyTime performances; restaurants; banquet and rehearsal space; a gift shop and administrative offices.

NJPAC ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

NJPAC launched Arts Education in 1992, a full five years before the Performing Arts Center's scheduled opening in 1997. Through carefully directed research, the Arts Education staff under the direction of NJPAC Vice President Philip S. Thomas, isolated areas in arts education that require greater concentration -- notably the fields of dance and theater -- and created programs to enrich those areas.

"The children represent NJPAC's future," Thomas said, "and it is our hope that the light of our stages will become beacons for life-long learning."

The Bell Atlantic Passport to Culture SchoolTime and FamilyTime Performance Series fills the year with a kaleidoscopic schedule of dance, music and theater performed by professionals

(more)

with heralded expertise in communicating to young people as well as providing a professional venue for performances by children.

The series also includes curriculum resource materials, meet-the-artist sessions, backstage tours and child and parent workshops.

The SchoolTime Performance Series, offered between October and June, is designed to enable educators to organize groups that will introduce students to a complete and enriching theater experience. Tickets are priced at \$7 per student and are on sale now. One free ticket will be provided for each chaperon of 15 children.

A special NJPAC educators information and ticketing center may be reached by calling 201-642-2002. A full-color catalog of all SchoolTime performances may be obtained by calling the same number. Season tickets for the FamilyTime series will be available by calling 1-888-GO-NJPAC beginning in March.

The backbone of the NJPAC arts education program, Thomas explained, has been the Center's ability to attract prominent individuals and organizations who have made multi-year commitments as Principal Affiliates and will be involved in a range of activities in addition to performances which includes development of community projects, master classes, lectures, teacher training and commissioning of new works.

(more)

Principal Affiliates designated for this inaugural season are made possible by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and include: the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; WBGO-Jazz 88; George Street Playhouse; Carolyn Dorfman; Nicholas Rodriguez; Nai-Ni Chen and Deborah Mitchell.

NJPAC Arts Education is made possible, in part, by the generous support of the Victoria Foundation, The Prudential Foundation, Allen and Joan Bildner and the NJPAC Arts Education Endowment Fund. Additional support has been provided by AT&T, the American Express Company, Bell Atlantic, City National Bank, Coalition of 100 Black Women, First Union National Bank, Fleet Bank, N.A., Friends of Senator Wynona Lipman, National Urban Affairs Council, PSE&G and The Star-Ledger.